

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT COMMENTS REGARDING US PROPOSAL TO
DETERMINE AFRICAN ELEPHANT TO BE THREATENED SPECIES.

REF: STATE A-0389

SUMMARY: ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
DETERMINATION THAT THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT IS A THREATENED SPECIES AND
FAVORS OPTION II WHICH WOULD PERMIT IMPORTATION OF IVORY INTO THE
USA ONLY FROM COUNTRIES WHICH HAD RATIFIED THE CONVENTION ON
INTERNATIONAL
TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES AND ONLY WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY EXPORT
PERMIT. END

SUMMARY.

1. MR. MANGWAYA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ZAIRIAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND TOURISM ADVISED EMBOFF
THAT, SPEAKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT, HIS DEPARTMENT IS VERY PLEASED THAT

THE US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE HAS DETERMINED THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT
TO BE A THREATENED SPECIES. HIS DEPARTMENT IS IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT
THAT THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT IS THREATENED AND, IN EFFORT TO PROTECT
SPECIES, DEPARTMENTAL DECREE WAS PROMULGATED IN MARCH, 1976
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PROHIBITING INDISCRIMINATE KILLING OF ELEPHANTS. FURTHERMORE,
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT HAS DRAFTED NEW GENERAL LAW ON HUNTING
WHICH WILL REINFORCE PROHIBITION ON HUNTING ELEPHANTS ONCE IT
IS SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT.

2. ACCORDING TO MANGWAYA, THE GOZ HAS NOT ISSUED EXPORT PERMIT
FOR A COMMERCIAL SHIPMENT OF RAW, UNWORKED IVORY SINCE THE END OF

1976 WHEN THE NATIONAL IVORY OFFICE WAS ABOLISHED. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, WHICH WAS ONLY INITIATED IN 1975, WAS THEN GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO ISSUE EXPORT LICENSES FOR COMMERCIAL SHIPMENTS BUT NO LICENSES WERE ISSUED WHILE THEY STUDIED THE SITUATION. MANGWAYA CLAIMS THAT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT DISCOVERED THAT THERE ARE LITERALLY TONS OF RAW IVORY STOCKPILED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. CONSEQUENTLY, DEPT OF ENVIRONMENT HAS DECIDED TO ISSUE EXPORT LICENSES UNTIL MAY OR JUNE 1979 TO DEplete THESE STOCKS. AFTER THAT DATE, ONLY THE ZAIRIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE WILL HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO SELL RAW IVORY. THAT INSTITUTE MANAGES THE NATIONAL PARKS, GAME PRESERVES, AND HUNTING. IT ALONE WILL HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO COLLECT IVORY FROM ELEPHANTS WHICH HAVE DIED OF NATURAL CAUSES OR WHICH HAD TO BE KILLED TO PROTECT HUMAN LIVES, AND TO SELL THAT RAW IVORY TO LOCAL ARTISANS. THE INSTITUTE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE WILL NOT BE PROHIBITED FROM EXPORTING RAW IVORY BUT MANGWAYA ASSUMES THIS WILL BE UNLIKELY SINCE DEMAND BY LOCAL ARTISANS SHOULD CONSUME ENTIRE SUPPLY.

3. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT IS STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF OPTION II WHICH WOULD PERMIT IMPORTATION OF IVORY INTO THE US ONLY FROM COUNTRIES WHICH HAD RATIFIED THE CONVENTION

ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA AND ONLY WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY AN EXPORT PERMIT. THIS WOULD HELP GOZ, WHICH RATIFIED CONVENTION IN OCTOBER, 1977 TO CONTROL EXPORTATION OF IVORY. FURTHERMORE, MANGWAYA FEELS THIS OPTION
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WOULD PROVOKE OTHER AFRICAN NATIONS TO RATIFY THE CONVENTION. MANGWAYA SPOKE STRONGLY AGAINST OPTION IV WHICH WOULD PERMIT IVORY IMPORTATION FROM THIRD COUNTRIES WHICH MAY NOT HAVE ELEPHANT POPULATIONS, AS LONG AS SHIPMENT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DOCUMENTATION FROM COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INDICATING THE EXPORTATION WAS LEGALLY ACCOMPLISHED. HE FELT THAT SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD BE SUBJECT TO FRAUD AND IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL.

4. WHEN US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE HAS DECIDED UPON REGULATIONS REGARDING IMPORTATION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANT PRODUCTS, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION. WILL REGULATIONS APPLY TO COMMERCIAL SHIPMENTS OF CARVED IVORY PRODUCTS, TO UNWORKED TUSKS PURCHASED BY TOURISTS FOR PRIVATE COLLECTIONS, AND TO CARVED IVORY PURCHASED FOR PRIVATE COLLECTIONS?
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